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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the initiation and implementation of a broad-based outreach program at Michigan State University (MSU), focusing on faculty and staff reaction to the program. The MSU program involved the reconceptualization of university outreach, defining it as a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service and is relevant to the full spectrum of university disciplines. The paper explores the interpretation and meaning given to outreach by faculty who are being asked to make outreach an integral part of their scholarship, comparing how faculty make sense of outreach with how administrators perceive that faculty make sense of outreach. It also describes the "outreach culture" in two organizations at MSU, the MSU Extension program and the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families. The paper concludes by discussing five lessons learned from the implementation of the MSU outreach program: (1) a gradually unfolding innovation may hinder adoption; (2) there are unique advantages to using "insiders" to study the implementation process; (3) decentralized diffusion may be preferable to centralized change initiatives; (4) external diffusion need not wait for intraorganizational diffusion to occur; and (5) potential adopters who reject innovations are typically viewed as irrational by agencies of change but not by themselves. (MDM)

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INITIATING, IMPLEMENTING, AND STUDYING LARGE-SCALE UNIVERSITY CHANGE: OUTREACH AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY[1]

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This paper concerns the initiation, implementation, and study of an administrative innovation at a large American university. After reviewing the environmental context leading to this change initiative, we focus on how increasingly focused activities coalesced into a coherent and identifiable innovation. Since the innovation is still in the process of being diffused, we describe process evaluation measures that capture faculty and staff responses to the innovation. The paper concludes with comments on the potential for institutionalization of this large-scale university change initiative.

THE CONTEXT

Throughout their history, American universities have received unprecedented levels of public support because they were viewed as essential components in the development of our nation. Not only have universities provided the vehicle for nearly universal access to postsecondary education, but they have also been full partners in commercializing agriculture, fueling industrial expansion, enhancing national defense, and utilizing science and technology to advance nearly every aspect of our lives. When our nation has faced major challenges, American universities have generally been full partners in addressing them through the extension and application of their vast knowledge resources.

Today our nation is challenged like never before. We struggle with the advent of a global economy in which all economic sectors must be prepared to compete. We are experiencing the growth of an economic underclass characterized by high unemployment, crime, and a breakdown of social fabric. We confront a crisis among our youth who struggle with substance abuse, teen pregnancy, academic failure, crime and delinquency, and the search for meaning in their lives. Environmental challenges threaten our capacity to pass on to future generations enough fresh air to breathe, clean water to drink, and safe food to eat. We are undergoing a fundamental cultural transformation as

thousands of new immigrants bring a new diversity and pluralism to our communities and forever change the nature of our civic and social life. Finally, we live in an age in which lifelong learning has become not simply a source of enrichment, but increasingly a strategic necessity.

If these are challenges for our nation, they are challenges for our universities as well. They require us to think anew about the organization of knowledge, the meaning of access, the nature of scholarship, and the limits as well as the potentials of universities as vehicles for social change. Our current national focus on university reform is long overdue but, with few exceptions, it is being framed too narrowly, often not reaching beyond what is admittedly an urgent need to strengthen and renew our commitment to undergraduate education.

DEFINING UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

There is another mission dimension that also requires thoughtful and expeditious attention if universities hope to maintain their public trust and support. Variously called "outreach," "public service," "extension," "lifelong education," "extended education," "continuing education," and a host of other names, it involves the complex and formidable process of extending and applying knowledge in order to help address the broad range of pressing challenges confronting our nation and its citizens.

University outreach takes many forms. It may involve applied research and technical assistance to help clients, individually or collectively, to better understand the nature of a problem they confront. It includes demonstration projects that introduce clients to new techniques and practices. Frequently, it extends the campus instructional capacity through credit and noncredit courses to meet the needs of adult students. Policy analysis to help shape and inform the public process is also outreach.

As universities exert leadership to broaden and refocus their outreach responsibilities, invariably important choices will be made. Urban campuses

such as the University of Southern California, Cleveland State University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago have chosen to focus outreach activities on urban problems. Land-grant institutions such as Clemson University, the University of Minnesota, and Oregon State University have reconceptualized outreach by broadening extension service and extended education missons. Choices have also been made by third party organizations such as the National Association for State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to play proactive, facilitating roles in the restructuring of university outreach.

At Michigan State University, a joint AAU and land-grant university, the decision was made "... to strengthen outreach by making it a more central and integrated dimension of the institution's overall mission." (Provost's Committee on University Outreach, 1993: vi). The intellectual foundation of outreach has been expressed by the Provost's Committee on University Outreach in their definition of outreach:

> Outreach is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge and is conducted for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions.

This conception of outreach is different from traditional perspectives in three important ways.

First, outreach is scholarship. Some observers contend that scholarship involves developing or creating new knowledge or, at the very least, synthesizing knowledge in a new way. From this perspective, scholarship is generally synonymous with research. Others offer that "reflective practice" distinguishes scholarship from non-scholarly, repetitive activities. At the literal level, scholarship is reflected in what scholars do: They teach, conduct and manage research projects, and serve the university, their disciplines, fields, or professions, as well as the surrounding society. Yet all of us have observed teaching that is not always scholarly, have read research that appears too mechanical to be called scholarship, and have experienced service that has more to do with other attributes than with any

scholarly gifts.

Scholarship is the thoughtful creation, interpretation, communication, or use of knowledge that is based in the ideas and methods of recognized disciplines, professions, and interdisciplinary fields. What qualifies an activity as "scholarship" is that it be deeply informed by accumulating knowledge in some field, that the knowledge is skillfully interpreted and deployed, and that the activity is carried out with intelligent openness to new information, debate, and criticism (Provost's Committee on University Outreach, 1993: 2).

Second, outreach cross-cuts the university mission of teaching, research, and service rather than standing alone as a separate and conceptually distinct form of scholarly activity. There are forms of "outreach teaching," "outreach research," and "outreach service" just as there are forms of non-outreach teaching, research, and service. For example, off-campus credit coursework is an example of outreach teaching. Likewise, working collaboratively with a community health center to conduct research designed to increase the impact of health education programs would be an example of outreach research. Outreach service calls on the scholar's expertise and occurs when the subject-matter being extended pertains to the programs and mission of the university unit(s) in which the scholar is appointed. A professor of urban planning who serves on a city's urban planning commission engages in outreach service. On the other hand, many worthwhile forms of service to society are not outreach. For example, when a chemist serves on the fundraising committee of a local nonprofit organization--a role that is apart from one's scholarly expertise and the programs of one's university unit--that person engages in non-outreach service.

Third, outreach is relevant to the full spectrum of university disciplines. Outreach is not only important for faculty and staff in extension services, education, and engineering. Extension appointments are not requisite for outreach to occur. Physics professors who visit high schools, student nurses serving rural clients, graduate students and

undergraduates involved in field research or for-credit community service projects, academic consultants who target businesses for on-site teaching and the collection of survey data, librarians who make collections available to external constituents, all do university outreach. Universities are host to a great variety of activities that are not typically considered to be outreach.

INITIATING THE RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF OUTREACH

The process of reconceptualizing outreach did not rest with the Provost' Committee on University Outreach alone. A variety of activities occurred on campus with the goal of integrating outreach into the fabric of the university. These activities, taken together, comprise the initiation stage for the reconceptualization of outreach.

MSU's first step towards the organizational integration of outreach was a dramatic one. Lifelong education was decentralized by phasing out the unit that had been responsible for administering the lifelong programs of the university and moving most of the resources, both financial and human, into the university's fourteen colleges. This restructuring meant that instructional outreach would be the responsibility of every academic unit, not the responsibility of a separate lifelong education unit.

Along with the elimination of the lifelong education administrative unit, the university created the position of a vice provost for university outreach who reports to the provost and is responsible for leadership, coordination and support of the overall outreach mission. While the programmatic responsibilities for outreach reside with the major academic units, the vice provost is expected to oversee all aspects of the outreach mission with the goal of ensuring that these outreach efforts are internally coordinated, externally linked, responsive to important societal needs, and consistent with the university's mission, strengths, and priorities. The vice provost is also responsible for recommending to the provost changes in university policies and procedures that enhance the campus outreach mission.

A third major component of the university's efforts to further integrate outreach as a major academic mission involved changes in the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service. The provost charged a campus-wide faculty committee to study and make recommendation concerning the future of the MCES. The committee recommended that extension needed to broaden its programming and constituent base, strengthen its access to a broader array of faculty resources from throughout the campus, and generally become more integrated into the academic life of the campus. Over the past several years, much progress has been made toward these goals. Not the least of which is a change in name to Michigan State University Extension. This is not only a symbolic action, but reflects a change in the reporting structure of the extension director who now reports to the vice provost for university outreach in addition to the vice provost and dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

While organizational restructuring was a formidable challenge, the real test has been to influence a cultural shift at the college, departmental, and individual faculty level in support of outreach. This is much of the challenge that has been addressed in a report prepared by the Provost' Committee on University Outreach on University Outreach. A committee of 24 members met for nearly two years with the charge of advancing an intellectual foundation for university outreach, and then to use that foundation as the basis for proposing a set of strategic initiatives for further strengthening outreach at the university. The role of the Provost' Committee on University Outreach was to coalesce ideas about outreach and move the innovation from initiation to implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The struggle to reconceptualize outreach is matched by a struggle to develop an implementation strategy. In many ways, this is *the* major outreach challenge facing the university. The most critical component of the

implementation strategy is arguably the definition of outreach developed by the Provost' Committee on University Outreach. As discussed earlier, this definition of outreach centers on three key aspects of (1) *outreach as scholarship*, (2) *outreach as complementary* to the traditional university missions of teaching, research, and service, and (3) *outreach as relevant* to all university disciplines. That the Provost' Committee on University Outreach came to define and understand outreach as scholarly, complementary to ongoing activities, and relevant across the university is important but perhaps not surprising. Innovations that are designed to be as complementary as is possible with the system into which they will be diffused stand a better chance of being adopted and implemented by audiences that have been targeted to receive the change initiative.

The Provost' Committee on University Outreach designated faculty as the primary target audience for its report. In the U.S., faculty are acculturated to strive for the attainment of scholarly research and teaching, so framing outreach as a scholarly activity was very important. Diffusion is always a political process, so framing outreach as complementary to what faculty were already engaged in, in all disciplines, was politically important. So although members of the committee believed in these three key aspects as vital to their definition of outreach, they also sought to make the change initiative as compatible as possible with faculty values and work lives. It was hoped that this pragmatism would help move the innovation from conceptualization to implementation, from rhetoric to reality.

Concrete implementation strategies were forwarded by the provost's committee. In particular, the implementation strategies call for a distribution of outreach responsibilities, measures for quality outreach, and adjustments in the faculty reward system.

Administrator's and Unit Level Responsibilities. Newton (1992) suggests that every good college and university has two cultures: The corporate community and the community of scholars. Michigan State University, like all institutions of higher education, has a corporate responsibility to fulfill

its mission-related obligations. Outreach is one of those obligations. At the same time, a good university is a place where faculty engage in scholarly activities that advance the frontiers of knowledge, and where scholarship is conducted in an open, free, and unencumbered manner.

The "two cultures" dilemma as it pertains to outreach is resolved in part by recommending that the university administration do everything that it can to make outreach a "natural part of the faculty's intellectual life" by framing the concept as intrinsically appealing and easy to engage in through the use of softer forms of influence rather than overt pressure and sanction. It is also recommended that the university lodge primary responsibility for outreach planning and accountability at the level of the academic unit. For many issues the faculty member is the unit of accountability. Advancing the premise that outreach is the obligation of every unit, although not every faculty member, gives units the flexibility and freedom to advance plans and programs that "make sense" for them. Different units will probably come forward with very different plans and programs. A "unit choice" approach was seen as preferable to mandating that every unit engage in specific or standard outreach efforts (e.g., off-campus credit coursework, extension, continuing professional education).

Advancing the Goal of Engaging in Quality Outreach. Many on campus may think that the goal is to increase the amount of outreach undertaken at MSU. There is currently an impressive amount of outreach currently taking place at MSU although a good share of this work is either not reported or not viewed as outreach. Increasing the volume of outreach activity at MSU is not the goal. To the contrary, the implementation strategy includes carefully reviewing and evaluating outreach for quality. At the same time, the university is refraining from establishing a university-wide metric for evaluating outreach quality across the campus. Instead, a set of indicators has been proposed that could be used as a starting point for unit-level deliberations regarding how to evaluate outreach quality. These measures might include quality as assessed through peer review, through client use of outreach products, through

an assessment of the socioeconomic impact of outreach programs.

Making Reasonable Adjustments in the Faculty Reward System. Many on campus feared a recommendation to overhaul the faculty reward system. Faculty rewards are viewed by many as the "sacred center" of the academy's values system. An important goal associated with implementing the reconceptualized outreach was to move outreach from the academic margin to the academic mainstream. But how an institution might seek to accomplish this goal is another matter altogether. As Keller (1983) advises, frontal assaults on core organizational values need to be "gingerly" pursued, if at all.

The approach suggested by the Provost' Committee on University Outreach is to advance the concept of reasonableness. This approach was informed by the thinking of several contemporary writers. Consider, for example, Checkoway's (1991: 224) perspective that research, teaching and service are merging as complementary activities. Separating these activities from each other is not only increasingly difficult to do, it is counterproductive. Units were requested to develop guidelines that could be used at merit pay, tenure, and promotion time. All that the committee asked is that all units begin at a common starting point: That outreach be considered an important and valued activity. Junior faculty were singled out for special attention, with the acknowledgement that outreach activities should not be stressed during the early years in some scholars' careers.

These implementation strategies are being disseminated broadly across campus in the document prepared by the Provost's Committee on University Outreach, *University Outreach at Michigan State University: Extending Knowledge to Serve Society*. Whether or not and why the dissemination of these recommendations yield action or implementation are questions we must now ask ourselves.

STUDYING IMPLEMENTATION

Large-scale administrative innovations such as outreach are diffused

through varied and unpredictable implementation processes. At Michigan State University the outreach effort is being initiated largely by university administrators but it is primarily individual faculty members and departments charged with its implementation and institutionalization. The shift in control toward faculty members and their departments during the implementation stage may create a situation where university administrators know very little about how this change is implemented.

Lack of knowledge about the implementation process may be offset in part by a focus on outcome measures and efforts to develop these measures are underway at Michigan State University. Meetings between the Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach and the Office of Planning and Budgets have resulted in outcome measures that focus primarily on off-campus credit instruction. Developing additional outcome measures for outreach is, however, difficult largely because of its "intangibleness." Outreach, as with most administrative innovations, is subject to interpretation and negotiation (Angle, 1989) and the current conceptualization of outreach leads to an innovation that is more than "one thing." This is one of the reasons that the implementation strategy lodges primary responsibility for outreach planning and accountability at the level of the academic unit. What this means in developing outcome measures is that finding a unifying set of measures is very problematic if not improbable. It may be that only vague definitions can be used across units which in turn will raise issues of data reliability and validity.

Should agreement be reached on the definition of the outcome measures, the usefulness of these measure will be diminished somewhat by the amount of time it takes to collect the measures. Time is spent by central administrators and institutional researchers developing forms to record the data. Time is also spent by faculty members and chairs in responding to these measures. It also takes time to code the data and format the results. And too, the change is just now being implemented. There may not be outcome results to report for several years. Consequently, it is conceivable that

institutionally verifiable outreach outcome measures may not be available for several years. Relying on such traditional outcomes measures to evaluate whether or not outreach is being integrated into the mission may occur too late to make corrective changes in the implementation strategy.

A final concern for relying upon outcome measures is that they tend to keep administrators and researchers at a distance from the everyday lives of the institutional members. Outcomes measures may not speak to the values or processes institutional members experience as they make sense of change (Attinasi, 1990). Rather than focus on the change process, administrators see inputs (initiation) and outputs (degrees of goal achievement) and then make plausible inferences about the relationship (implementation) between the two (Birnbaum, 1991). Yet it is the process of implementation that must be evaluated if we want to ensure the institutionalization of outreach. Information early in the process will allow us to (1) identify initial barriers and drivers to integrating outreach, (2) identify how outreach is being redefined or adapted, and (3) make changes in the implementation strategy to facilitate greater adoption.

Process evaluations in colleges and universities are often met with resistance by institutional researchers. This reluctance to engage in process measures or evaluations may be explained by the cost of such studies. Process evaluations are often time consuming, requiring personal interviews, questionnaires, and the gathering of unit-specific documents. Another possible explanation may be a reluctance by institutional researchers to learn new skills. Or it may be that administrators do not want to know how a change initiative is really developing.

At MSU there *are* efforts underway to evaluate the *process* of outreach implementation. One evaluation explores the interpretation and meaning given to the outreach initiative by on campus faculty who are being asked to make outreach an integral part of their scholarship. This same study then compares how faculty make sense of outreach with how administrators perceive faculty make sense of outreach. A second study focuses on the outreach culture in two

organizations that organize and conduct outreach at Michigan State. The purpose and design of these studies is discussed in the following two sections.

STUDYING FACULTY SENSEMAKING

As mentioned earlier, outreach is subject to interpretation and negotiation. Accordingly to Angle (1989), the interpretation of administrative innovations depends on what members of the organization bring to the situation (e.g. professional identity) and what they encounter there (e.g. departmental policies). Drawing from diffusion research we can add that the characteristics of the innovation itself also influence its interpretation (Rogers, 1983). Consequently, we expect outreach to undergo transformations as it is being implemented. In an effort to understand this transformation process, we have asked ourselves how faculty interpret and negotiate outreach. We think of this as a sensemaking process.

Sensemaking is a process whereby faculty members construct a framework for outreach that has meaning for them. Examining how faculty members respond to change, and particularly how they see their situation, is complicated by the multiple roles and relationships associated with academic life. Faculty members may associate a change with their roles in the institution, individual college, or with their academic department. A change may be seen as connected to any or all of the various components of the professorial role such as teacher, researcher, consultant, service provider, colleague, and disciplinary member. Personal dimensions of the professor's life, such as family and friends, may become affiliated with a change. Moreover, defining any situation as new is seldom the result of a single decision. Rather, it may be the cumulative effect of a series of decisions (and "non-decisions," or decisions by default) many of which may be only peripherally connected to the issues involved (Eveland, 1985).

At MSU a study is beginning to identify the outreach implementation

process from within the faculty members' lives as they make sense of the change. This study will also consider how administrators perceive faculty members are making sense of outreach. Both parties will then be better informed as to what is and is not occurring and why.

The investigation will consist of two departmental case studies and one administrator case study. Data collection will consists of semi-structured interviews, observations, and analysis of university, college, and department documents. The central research activity consists of interviewing faculty and administrators. University documents, such as the Data Book and planning documents, will be collected. College documents will be collected from the Dean's office and may consist of program review materials, information specific to outreach, and hiring/promotion guidelines and job descriptions. Promotion and tenure guidelines, planning documents, and committee meeting notes may be collected from the two departments being studied.

The two departmental case studies will be drawn from one college where there has been strong support by the dean to engage in outreach. Support for outreach in the one department has been encouraged in part by a top down process consisting of a grant from the Office of the Vice Provost of University Outreach to develop a master's program off-campus. Ongoing observations of this department indicate that the faculty are divided on what role, if any, outreach should play at the department level.

Support for outreach in the second department is being generated at the faculty and chair levels. This department has applied for several competitive outreach grants and has received one such grant. The chairperson has recently been selected as a participant in a program to encourage departments to explore ways to rebalance and integrate faculty roles and responsibilities across MSU's missions. From each department about eight faculty and the chairperson will be interviewed twice. To the extent possible, subjects will be representative of the tenure, rank, gender, years at the institution, and across people's emphasis on teaching, research, and service.

For the administrator case study, administrators will be recruited based

on their position in the college and central administration. Each administrator will have some responsibility or be knowledgeable about the conduct of outreach. A sample of administrators will be chosen based upon conversations with (1) the dean of the college within which the two departments which are the focus of this study exist, and (2) the Vice Provost for University Outreach. Approximately nine administrators, about half from central administration and half from the college, will participate in the study.

The primary value of this study will be to identify patterns in how faculty members make sense of outreach, to determine if administrators leading the change perceive of similar patterns, and the possible implications of these findings for the duration and institutionalization of the change. This study will help illuminate how implementation occurs by focusing on those experiencing the change and their decisions regarding the change. Since the implementation of this change is ongoing lessons learned from this study could, for example, be used to redirect implementation efforts or lead to a decision to discontinue the change effort. For other campuses considering similar endeavors, this study could offer suggestions on introducing the change to the system and what to expect once it gets there.

This study will also articulate a faculty voice. In the process of being engaged in this study, or in the reading of it, faculty members may become more consciously aware of how they and their colleagues construct and respond to a change. This process may lead to a better understanding of what keeps them from changing as well as what they value and should not change.

STUDYING ORIENTATIONS TO OUTREACH AMONG OUTREACH STAFF

A complementary investigation of changing orientations toward outreach work was carried out by studying the employees of two outreach organizations on the MSU campus. This study measures the degree to which two outreach models are represented in the outreach cultures of these two organizations.

Culture refers to a structured set of shared meanings among the members of a social system, in this case faculty and extension workers. While most faculty at Michigan State have not thought of outreach as being central to their careers, faculty specialists and many staff members of university centers, institutes, and agencies are employed explicitly to conduct outreach. This is the case in Michigan State University Extension, an 80-year old organization with more than 800 employees and 30,000 volunteers throughout the state, and the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, a relatively new and small organization dedicated to facilitating faculty work with community representatives in applied research projects.

In each of the two organizations, dynamic, high-profile leaders were hired in 1991. Each leader was hired to promote and realize a radical change in outreach culture among their employees. MSU Extension, like the state extension services at almost all U.S. land-grant colleges, is still organized to largely serve an agricultural community that, for the most part, no longer exists or now actively helps itself. Agriculture commodity groups and other constituents who have been well served by MSU Extension do not want the organization to turn away from agriculture. The Institute for Children, Youth, and Families has had fewer entrenched obstacles to overcome in creating a new outreach culture, but this organization faced the difficulty of creating an outreach niche for itself. Preexisting university outreach providers questioned whether the institute was needed and longterm funding was uncertain. So the difficult and related tasks of creating internal cultural change while managing interorganizational relations faced both leaders.

Leaders of each organization began a determined effort to change the outreach culture of their organization by emphasizing reciprocity, collaboration with faculty and external constituents, learning from nontraditional outreach partners, and the value of nonacademic knowledge. Accordingly, this study addressed questions such as: To what extent do outreach workers collaborate with faculty, each other, and community representatives in particular? To what extent do outreach workers hear about

community problems from different sources? To what degree do outreach workers access nontraditional sources of knowledge when they are working on community problems? To what extent do outreach workers perceive that they and constituents mutually benefit by working together?

Two models of university outreach conceptually organized the present research project: The co-learning model, and the knowledge dissemination model.

The co-learning model of university outreach has five components: It is a (1) collaborative and (2) mutually-beneficial process of applying (3) university-based knowledge and (4) community-based knowledge in which participants work to solve (5) community-based problems. Application, putting knowledge to practical use, is central to this outreach model. The function of applying knowledge is distinct from the other three knowledge functions in which universities engage: The generation of knowledge, through the conduct of basic research; the transmission of knowledge, through teaching students, writing papers, and giving talks; and the preservation of knowledge in archives and libraries (Boyer, 1990).

Unlike the two-way and iterative interpersonal communication that characterizes a co-learning model of university outreach, the knowledge dissemination model of outreach is a one-way, often one-to-many transmission. This difference in communication flow is a key distinction between the traditional knowledge dissemination model of how outreach workers behave, and the co-learning model of collaborative and frequently ongoing relations. It manifests itself in two beliefs: First, that community-based knowledge is not as important or valuable as university-based knowledge, and second, that any benefit accrued by agents is a result of their developing their own resources.

Attitudinal and behavioral data was obtained throughout two-years by various techniques. A multimethod approach enabled the research team to collect substantively different data through each method, and take advantage of the strengths of particular methods while at the same time compensating for weaknesses inherent in others. For example, written surveys of all

administrators and outreach workers in the two organizations enable the generalization of data to the level of the organizations, whereas other data collection techniques used such as participant observation, activity report analysis, and grant proposal analysis, do not. Participant observation provides very detailed and context-rich information that surveys cannot provide. A rhetorical analysis that compares leadership change messages with the perspectives of organizational members who participated in a series of focus group interviews focused on contrasting the values in leadership change messages with the values of outreach workers.

Every method was brought to bear on the distinctive and shared components of the co-learning and knowledge dissemination models: (1) the degree of collaboration in outreach work, (2) the distribution of benefit as a result of outreach, (3) the types of knowledge that are considered valuable by outreach workers, and (4) who identifies and defines community-based problems. The assumptions of the co-learning model capture the outreach values that the leaders of MSU Extension and the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families have sought to diffuse throughout their organizations. Evidence of their administrators and outreach staff thinking and acting in ways that reflect the components of this conceptual model may suggest that these cultural change messages have been adopted, implemented, and routinized in the organizations.

CONCLUSION

What are we learning from the reconceptualization, initiation, implementation and evaluation of outreach at Michigan State? How can these lessons inform other large-scale change efforts at Michigan State and other campuses? There are five lessons we want to share.

1. A gradually unfolding innovation may hinder adoption. We may have encouraged too much collaboration and information sharing. Early drafts of the outreach committee report, and to a lesser extent, outreach measures, were shared with faculty and administrators. These evolving documents left some

potential adopters asking "Why is this different from the last draft?" or "When are you going to do something?" The drafts also provided naysayers plenty of opportunities to find and focus on weaknesses. The literature on diffusion of innovations suggests that innovations that are demonstrated in exemplary rather than experimental form are perceived more positively by potential adopters. In an effort to make outreach at MSU more of a "bottom-up" effort, there may have been conflicting messages and additional uncertainty created. This may hinder the adoption of outreach.

2. There are unique advantages to using "insiders" to study the implementation process. In the present case, campus faculty were a primary target audience for change messages. We involved faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates in studying the responses of faculty and outreach workers to the innovation. Institutional researchers may be unwilling or unprepared to conduct such process evaluations. The costs of paying for this research has been figured into the outreach budget, thereby making evaluation a serious component of the planning process. Academic research teams supplied information in a reasonably short time period, and brought a scholarly knowledge of institutional change literature to the evaluations with which institutional researchers may be unfamiliar. Perhaps of greatest importance, faculty and some administrators view the data as being more credible or unbiased because of faculty involvement in the evaluation process. In diffusion terms, faculty and students are more homophilous with the most important potential adopters than are institutional researchers. Thus perceptions of credibility (both in terms of expertise and trust) will be higher among the target group.

3. For large-scale administrative innovations, decentralized diffusion systems can be preferrable to more centralized change initiatives. At Michigan State there is a history of large-scale innovations not being spearheaded, let alone implemented, by top administration. The culture at Michigan State supports a decentralized diffusion system in which adoption decisions occur at the department or individual faculty level. This is almost

antithetical to current literature which places the president central to any change initiative. While we acknowledge the important role that issue champions can play, we suggest that the role the president should play in bringing about change depends on the culture of the institution. Indeed, we may be able to bring about a more genuine form of culture change by relying less of central administration support and relying more on discussions with faculty who are then allowed to make individual adoption decisions.

4. External diffusion (campus to campus) need not wait for intraorganizational diffusion to occur.. MSU has been the primary initiators, the innovators, of a phenomena which is gaining national prominence. If outreach is not diffused or institutionalized, will this endeavor have been a failure? No, if Michigan State has been instrumental in developing the intellectual framework for outreach. Given that we are not an institution prone to centralized action, the implementation of outreach may be better realized at institutions who build and adapt the "MSU model" to their campus environments. We must also realize that our intellectual foundation is just that--a foundation. Others have and will continue to borrow from it, build on it, and adapt it to fit their context and needs, and they should do so.

5. Potential adopters who reject innovations are typically viewed as irrational by change agencies (those promoting a change) but not by themselves. Campus leaders who approach diffusion of a new idea like outreach as a problem of correcting or enlightening potential adopters will meet with strong resistance. A goal prior to conceptualization of a change strategy should be to understand potential adopters' perspectives about possible innovations, and to redesign innovations-in-progress to match target audience perceptions. Prior to diffusion, user needs analysis (to determine what it is that faculty and administrators already want) and environmental scanning (political analysis) should inform the design of a "prototype" innovation. At Michigan State, early and extensive consultation with potential adopters has lead to an innovation which, we believe, is more likely to be adopted. This is a necessary but not sufficient effort. Once a prototype exists, formative

evaluation through information-gathering from representative potential adopters should be conducted to learn their perceptions of the innovation's attributes, so that the prototype version of the innovation can be modified and the likelihood of adoption increased.

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